

# A Bolshevik Europe a Possibility of Near Future

## Poland Seen as the Only Wall to Withstand the "Red" Deluge

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THE more one touches the situation at the national capital at the present hour the more one is struck with the astonishing indifference to international problems, the enormous concentration upon domestic questions, and, beyond all else, the rather puerile effort to discuss and view questions which are essentially international from a totally parochial point of view. It is as if by common consent all men in public office were seeking to abolish, by silence and by avoidance, the great events and the great deeds of recent years and believed that by such a course one could dispose of the great problems which have resulted from recent world disturbances.

The most striking illustration of this tendency is found in the attitude toward Bolshevism. We have in Washington, as everywhere else in the United States at the present moment, discussions of the so-called "Red" peril. One hears solemn discussions based upon the argument that the extension of the policy of deportation to include a few thousands instead of a few hundreds of alien anarchists will presently remove the danger which exists for the nation in the Bolshevik disturbance in Russia.

### Bolshevism's March

Conversely, not the smallest interest is manifested anywhere in the rapid and still uninterrupted westward movement of Bolshevism itself. The fact that within a year Bolshevism—that is, Trotsky and Lenin—has been able to establish its control over the larger part of Russia, to dominate upward of 125,000,000 human beings, to destroy the armies made up of Russians who have challenged its control; to break through the cordon sanitaire of the Paris Conference; to reach the Baltic and the Black seas, excites no comment and no apprehension.

While the discussion of the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles periodically languishes and recurs with renewed energy, there is an ever-increasing conviction that the right policy for America is complete separation from Europe, and even the crusade against the "Reds" takes on in some degree the character of an effort to reinforce our withdrawal from Europe by the expulsion from America of a certain number of undesirable Europeans.

A year ago we were, officially at least, embarking upon our huge campaign to make the world safe for democracy by imposing American ideals upon Europe; to-day it would seem we are, with more deliberation, seeking to make the United States safe for Americans by exiling certain European ideas.

This reaction is natural enough; it was probably inevitable; yet if the country is at the present hour impressed with the very great dangers of too considerable intermixture in European affairs, can we safely accept a course which leads straight to complete separation from European affairs and thus leaves us condemned in the end to fight single-handed certain European diseases, of which Bolshevism is the most conspicuous, which may owe their greatest and most menacing expansion to our indifference?

### Believe War Over

Washington would have you believe—and the country believes it with unmistakable readiness—that the world war is over. All through the country one hears urgings that the Treaty of Versailles be ratified by the Senate without reservations or with reservations—neither circumstance seems much to signify—as the last circumstance in the restoration of peace. It seems to be a common notion that the mere ratification of the peace document will in some mysterious manner close this chapter of history and terribly disarm the millions who, from the Gulf of Finland to the

Dalmatian coast and from the Vistula to the Tigris, still stand in arms.

But patently the ratification of peace will not affect the Bolsheviks. Even the sending home of a certain number of "Reds" cannot be calculated to strike more terror into the heart of Lenin than was the dispatch of Von Papen and his associates to Germany during the war successful in bringing the Kaiser to hear reason. We did not stop German intrigue in America by our expulsions, we did not even mitigate the evil, and the reason was that the trouble was in Germany, not in America, and as long as we were not ready to lend our strength to crush the evil in its home it continued to menace us in ours. Our experience with Bolshevism will not be different.

In the present article I am going to try to retrace certain events, significant, in my judgment, of the world situation to-day and particularly important in their relation to the Bolshevik problem. In recent days the Bolsheviks have reached the Baltic, the power of resistance of the Letts and Lithuanians is exhausted, Poland and Rumania, alone of the border states, remain. Poland had a large army, but it has also to face the German menace, for the Allies have failed to give Poland Danzig, and the title of the mineral districts of Silesia awaits adjudication by plebiscite. Despite an improvement in domestic conditions Poland is incapable of maintaining an army of 500,000 in the field long without Allied subventions which are not to be expected, and with this army the single remaining bulwark against the Bolsheviks will disappear. As for Rumania, she is ready and willing to make peace with the Bolsheviks, having been treated with contempt by the Western nations, and for the present such a peace falls in with Bolshevik necessities.

### Poland the Only Wall

It is upon Poland that world attention must now be fixed. But the Western nations, so far from recognizing that Poland is the single wall against the Russian "Red," are following their old policy of procrastination, which, in the last war, sacrificed both Serbia and Rumania. In recent days Lloyd George has affirmed that the Western nations will not make peace with Bolshevism, but for maintaining a state of war there is left only Poland as a cornerstone.

It is of the utmost importance to Germany, if she is to regain her old position, not mainly or even primarily her military station, but her economic situation, to see Poland destroyed. She needs her old Polish provinces—West Prussia and Posen; she requires certain possession of upper Silesia, now awaiting a plebiscite; she needs Danzig and the control of the lower Vistula, and beyond these she needs contiguity with Russia, the one field for her industry which may open the way to commercial renaissance.

Thus, whatever their other differences, the Bolsheviks and the Germans, without regard to party faction, political or religious difference, have a common objective—the destruction of Poland. For the Bolsheviks the elimination of Poland would remove the only army in their pathway, the sole menace to their mastery of Russia and their future expansion into that chaos of hunger stricken districts which has replaced the comparative order of the old Hapsburg Empire.

The Germans believe that, once they have crushed Poland and restored their old unity, they can cope with the Bolsheviks, they can reorganize Russia. The Bolsheviks believe that with Poland down they can sweep westward, at least to the Rhine and the French Alps, enlisting the elements of disorder and of anarchy in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy. But for both the

first step is the destruction of Poland. And in the present state of Allied policy, who can doubt that Poland is doomed?

The worst phase of the Polish problem lies in the fact that the so-called liberal elements, all over America and Europe, have contributed largely to discrediting the Polish state in advance of its extreme danger. Thus once more, wholly intentionally, in the main, but not less fatally, they have prepared the way for the enemy. The Poles, who under Sobieski saved Europe from the Turk, are now necessarily the main bulwark against the Bolshevik. Exactly in the same way, the Poles, who centuries ago blocked German expansion into Russia and preserved the Slav from Teutonic conquest, are again the single barrier to new German expansion.

### If Poland Falls

Let us suppose that Poland, without effective aid from the Western nations, succumbs to Russian attack, as the armies of Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenitch have already succumbed, remembering that it is against Poland that the next Bolshevik assault will infallibly be directed, what then? Obviously there will remain only the Czechoslovak state as a partial barrier between the Bolshevik and the hopeless and wellnigh insane population of Austria on the north and the hardly less disturbed peoples of Hungary on the south. And to aid the Czechs the Allies will have no other chance than the dispatch of troops across Germany.

It may be that in this situation Germany will be able to resist Bolshevism, it may be that she will not succumb, that the elements of unrest and disorder will continue to be impotent, but this means that the military and Junker elements, regaining control, called to power by the German people to protect them from the Eastern danger, will create new armies, fight a new war, probably victorious, but carrying with it

a grave menace to the West and a permanent cessation of any payment of indemnities, for the Western nations will be compelled to forego the payment of moneys while Germany is fighting a Bolshevik menace, only less grave for them than for her and bound to be almost fatal if Germany is conquered.

If Germany be beaten, Bolshevism will arrive at the Rhine and the Alps, at the frontiers of Italy and of France, and the domestic condition of Italy makes such a circumstance gravely disquieting. But if Germany is successful she will have forged new weapons, opened the way to the commercial exploitation of Russia and escaped from that state of military impotence which makes her resistance to Allied demands purely formal at the present hour.

Either way, too, the danger for America is patent. We have been going through a stage of national apprehension resulting from the relatively restricted operations of a handful of "Reds," representing a Russian anarchy still far removed from our shores. But what would be the situation if Bolshevism should sweep over all Central Europe? What if the armies of Trotsky and Lenin should presently acquire the cohesion necessary to repeat the achievement of the armies of Revolutionary France? Does any one suppose that the domestic manifestations would be less disturbing than now? Would we be able permanently to escape the duty of joining with Britain and France in a new struggle against a foe far more menacing than was Germany, against a doctrine far more destructive of our ideas and our civilization than the Prussian?

### A German Renaissance

And if Germany were successful? Obviously the result would be the renaissance of the old Prussian ideal, for only force could defeat Bolshevism, and the German military leaders, restored to national favor by

fresh victories, which would replace the memories of recent defeats, would infallibly seek to regain their old situation on the Rhine and the Moselle, once they had established it on the Vistula. For Britain and for France this would mean the threat of 1914 ten times magnified. Could we permit France and Britain to be destroyed, to pass under the German yoke, as Germany and Austria passed under the Napoleonic yoke a little more than a century ago? If we did we should find ourselves, like Britain in the earlier era, engaged single-handed in a struggle against the Continent of Europe, with practically no ally.

### The Real Peril

American newspapers are filled with endless columns of discussion of the menace constituted by the presence in this country of a few hundred Russian "Reds," but the press and the public men alike seem apathetic in the presence of the rapid expansion of the world area actually dominated by leaders who profess the same doctrine as our handful of domestic "Reds," and the addition of millions to their empire, out of whom they will be able to fashion armies in the future to carry on that war their American agents never hesitate to proclaim.

Actually the world situation at the present hour is such that a Bolshevik supremacy in Europe is by no means out of the range of possibility. In the last three years this Bolshevik doctrine and the leaders who profess it have gained control of an empire of more than 125,000,000 people, that is, of Russia, exclusive of the border tribes and of eastern Siberia. It is actually extending its control into the territories of the border tribes, and even into eastern Siberia. In its pathway westward to-day only two feeble states, Poland and Czechoslovakia, separate it from the middle of Europe, which, from Vienna to Constantinople, has been reduced to a state of political and economic

anarchy and is filled with millions of human beings actually on the verge of starvation. The first three years of the French Revolution were far less prosperous for that new régime, yet it took Europe nearly a quarter of a century to defeat the revolution and the empire, which presently organized France on the new basis.

It is the pleasant theory of the careless and thoughtless that each new age, each new moment in history, presents brand new problems, America at Paris resolutely eliminated from the discussion of the reorganization of Europe and the world the facts of the past and insisted that we lived in a world in which the old had been burned up, and out of the fire human nature, and geography as well, had emerged purified and transformed. With this in mind the world, but America more than the rest, has turned its back upon history at the precise moment when it is repeating itself in a striking fashion.

When the Turks were seeking to break into Europe and were pounding at the walls of Constantinople, the Western nations, occupied with their own interests, the Western peoples, if one prefer this designation, permitted Byzantium to fall; indeed, led by the romantic emotions expressed in the Crusades or by selfish reasons to the exploitation of the Aegean Islands, contributed to the ruin of the Eastern Empire. The result was the arrival of the Turk before the walls of Vienna and the continuation of wars growing out of Turkish questions of which we can hardly believe we have seen the last.

The extinction of Poland, an act of pure selfishness, planned by Frederick the Great, but consummated by Hapsburg, Romanoff and Hohenzollern dynasties, has led to struggles which have in turn ended the reign of each of these houses, destroyed Austria, given Russia over to anarchy and raised in a new form the Slav menace for Germany, which has continued with few interrup-



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## America Is Asleep to the Menace of the Lenine and Trotzky Regime

tions since the Congress of Vienna set its final seal of sanction upon the extinction of Poland.

In the World War neither the British nor the French could take full measure of the value of Serbia, and Britain embarked upon the fatal Gallipoli venture. The result was the arrival of Germany at the Golden Horn, the direct attack upon Egypt and the indirect menace to India. Too late, the importance of a barrier at the Danube was appreciated and the loss of the troops sacrificed at the Dardanelles bemoaned.

To-day Poland fulfills the same rôle that Serbia had in 1915, that Constantinople had in the fifteenth century. She is the advanced sentinel of our Western democracies, just as Byzantium was the single barrier of Christianity against the militant gospel of Mahomet. But Poland cannot single-handed hold the gate, nor is it for the immediate interests of the Germans that she should occupy that gate.

Two years ago, at this very hour, the Bolshevik agents were listening in Brest-Litovsk to the harsh sentence imposed by victorious militaristic Germany. They were compelled to cede provinces, recognize obligations, yield everything. The world laughed a rather wry laugh at the plight of Trotsky and Lenin. But to-day the Russian Revolution is master of most of Russia, the Ukraine has fallen, the Baltic provinces wait like ripe plums to fall to the now unresisted invader. The last semblance of domestic revolt is being crushed out; only Poland is left of all our policy of the cordon sanitaire, which becomes now as unresisting as a marsh fog, however impressive it may seem to the eye.

A year ago the world waited impatiently upon the Paris Conference, just coming together, to obtain peace. It believed that by some mysterious legerdemain the few scores of statesmen and politicians, soldiers and officials gathered at the French capital could organize the chaos created by nearly five years of destruction, and that by drawing a few lines on the map, accumulating a mass of words on white paper, those men could restore order, prosperity, comfort—do everything but recall the dead, who lay by millions on all the battlefields, from the Marne to the Vistula.

The Peace Delusion

To-day a similar delusion takes the form of a faith that if the treaty of peace, drafted at Paris, is only ratified by the United States, if the Senate sitting in solemn session on Capitol Hill, above the Potomac, only sufficiently reverses its previous stand so that the votes of the two-thirds needed to approve the treaty be obtained, then peace will result; that from Esthonia to Dalmatia, through all the regions where men stand in arms or women and children starve, order will come automatically.

The truth is otherwise. Whatever else one may say for the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles by the United States, nothing is surer than that this ratification will not materially affect the situation in Russia; it will not have the smallest influence upon Trotsky and Lenin, who see opening before them the same vision of conquest which greeted the leaders of the nascent French Revolution when they had reduced France to their will. It will not automatically compel the Kurd to give over massacring the Armenian, it will not modify the situation along the eastern shore of the Adriatic, it will not allay the passions roused by French occupation of Syria or British adventure in Mesopotamia.

Peace can only be restored when we have restored a common basis of cooperation between the great masses of men who are now separated by new as well as old intellectual, moral and racial animosities. Bolshevism is a state of war against organized society as we know it. We cannot make peace effectively within a state of war, even though we sign endless papers and retire our influence to its own territory. American liberals fill the world with denunciations of the Western governments for their "invasion" of Russia, but what of the Russian invasion of America, Italy, of all Western countries?

My neighbors are immensely excited at the presence in their community of one or two or half a dozen Russian "Reds." But the prospect of the occupation of a whole province on the Baltic by the Russian "Red" forces, the arrival of Bolshevik armies in the environs of Riga, leaves them cold. Exactly in the same way for nearly three years we

were terribly excited over German propagandists and agents in America, but admirably self-restrained when German armies came to Brussels, to Antwerp, to Constantinople. Those of us who in that hour warned our fellow countrymen that in the end we should have no other choice than to fight the German were regarded as mad, were treated with contempt and even with anger as disturbers of the invaluable peace which was being illustrated by the Lusitania and other massacres.

Sending the "Reds" home to Russia and permitting the Russian "Reds" to overrun Europe is as futile a policy as dispatching men at the heads of German officials was not so many years ago. The note that fetched a real response was handed to the Kaiser on the shores of the Meuse and not on the banks of the Spree, and it was transmitted by cannon, not by cable.

The atmosphere of Washington to-day reminds me of the atmosphere which prevailed in the early autumn of 1915, when I visited the city. There was the same indifference to the world problems, the same confidence that America was unconcerned. There was, too, the same irritation at the domestic circumstance of German activity. But the idea that we should be dragged into the World War was held by no one as of real importance.

To say that Germany would continue to murder Americans wherever they interfered with German plans directly or indirectly, until that time when we took arms to prevent further aggression struck Washington of September, 1915, as stark madness. For two years thereafter I was nagged by Washington journalists and public men for declaring that we should be dragged into the war—for declaring it in print. Be their state of mind was only comparable to the state of mind which now again exists in the national capital.

Yet the circumstances are undeniably similar. Germanism was before all else, a challenge to our system of government, to our political, economic and intellectual civilization. Bolshevism is exactly an open challenge. We shall not rid of it by ignoring it save as it sends slight tendrils and shoots into our own garden. The near past over a few hundreds or thousands of "Reds" in the United States and the total disregard of the mounting millions in Russia, in all of Central Europe—these are evidences of a total failure to comprehend the basic facts in the situation, a situation which will presently have for us quite as real significance as did the World War.

### Notes Didn't Save Us

We shut our eyes from 1914 to 1917 to the significance to our own country of the World War. We relied upon notes, as we are now relying upon the promised ratification of another "scrap of paper." Will the consequences be less grave if in the present year Poland falls and the Bolsheviks arrive in the heart of Europe?

The fact which is becoming clearer and clearer with each successive month is that the World War is not over, that we have not achieved peace, that the great conflict, like the French revolutionary upheaval, which it daily tends to resemble more, will prove a struggle of many phases and that we are, in fact, merely entering the second phase.

Europe cannot long continue half-Bolshevik and half-democratic. Nor can Europe, left to itself, find the moral or the material strength to defeat Bolshevism. The situation in the situation of the war, when the Western nations were only saved from defeat by the enlistment of America. I confess that every shred of evidence that comes to me in Washington from European sources, save in the case of Britain and France, points straight toward the triumph of Bolshevism on the Continent or else to the restoration of German militarism to full strength and vigor as the opponent of the "Reds." Either solution is hardly less dangerous for America than for Britain and France. A battle between Ludendorff and Trotsky what is there for us to choose?

The way to get into trouble is to run away from it. We proved that in the German case. You can't stay long in Washington, at the present hour, without feeling that our Russian policy is an exact replica of our German course, and that it will lead us back to Europe by the most ignoble and expensive method. (Copyright, 1920, McClure Newspaper Syndicate)